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Hahn, Michael.
What is unconditional unionism? Speech.
New Orleans. 1863.

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WHAT IS UNCONDITIONAL UNIONISM?

SPEECH

OF THE

HON. MICHAEL HAHN,

(Late Representative in Congress,)

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

UNION ASSOCIATION OF NEW ORLEANS,

AT

LYCEUM HALL,

November 14, 1863.

New Orleans:
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[From the New Orleans Era of November 15th, 1863.]

MR. HAHN'S SPEECH.

Our readers will find in The Era, this morning, a full report of the speech delivered before the Union Association, last evening, by Hon. Michael Hahn, late representative in Congress. We cannot agree with Mr. Hahn, in the opinion that Louisiana is still a State in the Union, or a State at all; at the same time, this is a matter of theory, and Mr. Hahn proposes precisely the same solution of the question that we have always been in favor of—namely, a convention of the people, for the framing of a new constitution. We believe this to be a necessity of the case, while he regards it simply as a matter of expediency; and so, while differing in theory, we would agree in action. Mr. Hahn announces himself to be in favor of a free constitution, and thinks we had better abolish what little is left of slavery in the State; at the same time he would not attach this principle as a condition to his Unionism. We believe that slavery is virtually abolished in Louisiana already; and that in grafting freedom upon our new constitution, we shall only give form to the decrees of Providence. The Union men of Louisiana are, so far as we are informed, almost without exception, in favor of a free State, and we are glad that Mr. Hahn has so publicly announced his position in the matter. His rebuke of the Masonic Hall cabal is well deserved, and his objections to the constitution of 1862 are well worthy of study and reflection.

In a word, it affords us much gratification to lay the views of Mr. Hahn before the public, and to say that the course of action he proposes meets our hearty approval. The speech is a very suggestive one, and it is evident that its author has studied closely the various topics upon which he touches. It exhibits the spirit of candor, and is free from party vindictiveness. But we invite our readers to peruse it for themselves. They can draw their own conclusions, without further comment on our part.

[From the New Orleans Era, November 15th, 1863.]

UNION MEETING AT LYCEUM HALL.

ENTHUSIASTIC DEMONSTRATION.

SPEECH OF HON. MICHAEL HAHN.

One of the largest and most respectable audiences that have assembled in Lyceum Hall for a long time was in attendance last night to listen to the young and gifted orator of Louisiana, Hon. Michael Hahn, who had previously been announced as the speaker for the occasion. The ladies were, of course, there in full numbers, and the music of the City Band lent its chorus to enliven the scene. The meeting was sufficiently enthusiastic, and composed of the very best Union material in the city. At the appointed hour, the President, C. W. Hornor, Esq., took his seat, and after the usual preliminaries of organization, Mr. Hahn took the stand, and when the applause subsided, in his usual happy and pleasant manner, addressed the vast assemblage in the following language, as carefully taken down by our stenographic reporter:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I appear before you to-night in compliance with an invitation of the Union Association, and agreeably to the wishes of many citizens who value my political views, to address you a few remarks on questions of great concern to the people of Louisiana. I intend to avoid all effort at oratorical embellishment, and to speak to you in the calm and unvarnished style of reason and common sense. Instead of endeavors to arouse your passions, and to carry you along for the moment by tender appeals to your hearts, I will employ facts and reason, so that the impressions which I may make may be of a lasting character. We have lately heard and read a great deal in this community about a free press and free speech. I intend to make the test to-night as to the truth of the boast that free speech exists among us; for I expect to utter sentiments and present views which differ in certain respects with those entertained by many persons in this Hall. And I will say now,

that in consenting to address you on this occasion, I have not yielded in the slightest degree to the busy slanders of those who have unnecessarily and maliciously sought to injure me in this community, on one hand by denouncing me as a "negro-worshiping abolitionist," and on the other hand by stigmatizing me as a "Copperhead." I have, I think, shown my indifference to such slanders. They do not affect me; I pass them by "as the idle wind which I regard not." Nor can I be prevented from speaking to you on such subjects as I deem proper, by the appeals of friends who think that I ought to abstain from expressing my opinions on certain points for fear of damage to my political prospects. Political prospects! Who ever knew me to conceal or disguise my political opinions with a view to personal advancement? Who ever knew me as an office-seeker? Those in high places who now have the giving of offices, know whether I have sought or refused offices. I have no ambition except to remain a citizen of this great and prosperous Union. I shall, therefore, regardless of all outside influences, be they "wicked or charitable," speak to you from the honest convictions of my heart and mind, whether my remarks be received with applause or disapproval.

I can hardly say anything on the glorious theme of the Union which you have not already heard. On that subject I have frequently addressed you. The patriotic inscriptions which surround us on these walls, and the stars and stripes which hang over us, bear testimony to the patriotism of those who now meet in this Hall, and stand out in strong contrast with the appearance of this place when the Secession Convention of Louisiana plotted treason within this chamber. However pleasant might be the general theme of the Union, I feel that there are now other questions of an important and practical character which should engage our attention. I will, however, say that, if any man wishes to know how I stand politically, I will inform him that I stand fully and squarely on the platform of Abraham Lincoln. Call him "Abolitionist," or call him "Copperhead," with him I am ready to stand or to fall. Let him be as true in the future as he has been in the past, and whatever he, in his honest discretion, shall deem good for the preservation of the Union, I will approve, and whatever he shall denounce as injurious to the Union, I will condemn. I bitterly regretted the defeat of my standard-bearer in the last Presidential election—the noble Douglas—yet I have had opportunities of studying the character, moral and intellectual, of our present beloved Chief Magistrate, and I can sincerely give it as my opinion, that a better man than Abraham Lincoln could not have been elected.

My friends, I regret to see the Union men of this State so much and so bitterly divided on a number of incidental questions, as to almost cause the question of the Union to occupy a subordinate position. I regret that before the rebel army has yet been entirely swept from our State, and while there is still so much necessity for harmony among the friends of the Union, you should allow your feelings and prejudices on minor questions to lead you so far astray as to resort to all manner of personal and political abuse, bickerings and divisions, calculated to seriously retard the progress of the Union cause, embarrass the officers of the Government, and delay the restoration of civil power in our midst. I can truly say that I have not aided in getting up any such divisions; and, so help me God, I shall not raise any of the questions which are the cause of so many bitter contentions among you, over and above the question of the Union. It needs no argument to show that the man who does not go for the Union unless slavery is abolished, or unless slavery is preserved, annexes conditions to his Unionism, and is, therefore, not an unconditional Union man. On this subject I agree with Owen Lovejoy, of Illinois. In a debate which occurred in the House of

Representatives of the United States, on the 29th of January last, Mr. Lovejoy, addressing Mr. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, used this language:

"I will put the question to the gentleman now—if it is necessary to free all the slaves, and enlist them, in order to save the Union, whether he is willing that it shall be done?

"Mr. Wickliffe.—I will play the Yankee on you, and ask you a question in return. If the Union is to be saved or the negroes freed, are you in favor of emancipating the slaves and of letting the Union slide? (Laughter.)

"Mr. Lovejoy.—I am in favor of saving the Union first, last, and forever, by any means and all means, by abolishing slavery or by not abolishing it, as it can best be done. That is what I am in favor of. Now I want the gentleman to answer my question."

These are the noble words of a truly unconditional Union man. The man who does not approve this sentiment is no unconditional Union man. My own position is this: I am "for the Union *with* or *without* slavery, but prefer it *without*." I am emphatically an unconditional Union man. I will not make it a condition of my Unionism that slavery should be abolished, nor that it shall be maintained. I go for the Union in either case, but prefer it without slavery. We have the authority—if our common sense needed any—of the President for saying that these opinions, and various other shades of them, "may be sincerely entertained by honest and truthful men." Perhaps it would be well for us to read what he has said on this subject. In his reply to a committee, of which Mr. Charles D. Drake was chairman, representing a delegation of "radicals" from Missouri and Kansas, dated the 5th of October last, which was written while I was in Washington, and on the subject of which I heard the President's views orally expressed, the President uses this language:

We are in civil war. In such cases there always is a main question; but in this case that question is a perplexing compound—Union and Slavery. It thus becomes a question, not of two sides merely; but of at least four sides, even among those who are for the Union, saying nothing of those who are against it. Thus, those who are for the Union *with*, but not *without* slavery—those for it *without*, but not *with*—those for it *with* or *without*, but prefer it *with*, and those for it *with* or *without*, but prefer it *without*.

Among these, again, is a subdivision of those who are for *gradual*, but not for *immediate*, and those who are for *immediate*, but not for *gradual*, extinction of slavery.

It is easy to conceive that all these shades of opinion, and even more, may be sincerely entertained by honest and truthful men. Yet, all being for the Union, by reason of these differences, each will prefer a different way of sustaining the Union. At once, sincerity is questioned, and motives are assailed. Actual war coming, blood grows hot, and blood is spilled. Thought is forced from old channels into confusion. Deception breeds and thrives. Confidence dies, and universal suspicion reigns. Each man feels an impulse to kill his neighbor, lest he be killed by him. Revenge and retaliation follow. And all this, as before said, may be among honest men only.

One of the questions which has lately been thrust among the Union men of this city, and which has acted like a fire brand in some quarters, is that with regard to the present *status* of this State. A few gentlemen, who make up in point of talent for much which they want in point of numbers and originality, have sought to maintain a doctrine—as erroneous as it is mischievous—that Louisiana is now a Territory, and not a State of this Union. The fallacy and injustice of this doctrine have been so ably shown by many of the best lawyers of the country, especially in the recent speech of Hon. Montgomery Blair, delivered at Rockville, Maryland, which has been so extensively published and commented on, that I will not stop to discuss that question this evening. Some gentlemen of this city have recently made a publication, signed with their names, wherein they say:

"The Constitution of 1852, as amended by the Convention of 1861, was overthrown and destroyed by the rebellion of the people of Louisiana, and the subsequent conquest by the arms of the United States does not restore our political institutions."

The respectable source from which this bold and extraordinary declaration emanates entitles it to some notice. In our State Contitution, adopted in 1852, provided for a government Republican in its form, and contained no provisions conflicting with the Constitution of the United States, then it has not been overthrown, but still exists. The amendments referred to as having been adopted by the Convention of 1861, were no amendments at all, as they were in violation of the Constitution of the United States, and enacted by a treasonable vote of a Secession Convention. The very object of the army of the United State in coming here was to do away with the secession acts of the Convention and to keep Louisiana and the neighboring States in the Union. The presence of the army among us at this time, and the necessity of the establishment of martial law, of course sets aside and suspends for a time the active operation of the Constitution and laws of this State, so far only as they conflict with the orders and proclamations of the military commander. In all matters not provided for by martial law, the laws of the State are not suspended. Do we not see evidence of this every day? Go into our District Courts, named and regulated by our State laws, and you will there hear the members of the bar and the judges every day refer to the Constitution and laws of this State, which, we are told, have been "overthrown and destroyed by the rebellion of the people of Louisiana." The statement that this is a rebellion of the people of Louisiana is news to me. Indeed, I think it is news to the gentlemen who make it; for, if I am not greatly mistaken, they have frequently declared that Louisiana did not secede from the Union by a vote of her people. I should blush at the very mention of secession if I thought that a majority of the people of Louisiana had voted for a dissolution of this Union; and as a Union man, with my views of constitutional law, I cannot admit that a rebellion by all the people of a State has any legal effect, except such as may be produced by violence and brute force for the time being. As soon as this unlawful violence and insurrection is put down, the State resumes her position in the Union; and as soon as martial law is removed, her own loyal Constitution and laws, which have been temporarily suspended, regain their strength and go into operation. This proposition appears to me so plain, that I am really astonished to find a different opinion advanced by the able gentlemen whose language I have quoted.

But, because I argue thus, it must not be understood that I am an admirer of the present Constitution, or that I am in favor of continuing it in force. I have discussed the matter as a lawyer, in its logical and legal view; but, as a citizen, I am in favor of a convention of the loyal people of Louisiana for the purpose of framing a new Constitution. I could see no wisdom, no propriety, no common sense, in the effort which was lately made by some of our Union friends to restore civil authority by holding an election for State officers, etc., in the curious manner which characterized their proceedings. If their course had not partaken so much of the Know Nothing proceedings of former days, they might have succeeded in their undertaking. If, at a proper time, say about two months, before the day designated in the Constitution for the election, these gentlemen had come out openly, publicly and manfully, and announced their intention to hold an election, their action might have been traceable to motives of disinterested patriotism. But, in doing as they did, enveloping their movements in mystery, meeting in secret, concealing their ticket and giving no intimation of their contemplated election until about three days before the election, they endeavored to fasten on the people of this State a government in opposition to their wishes, and without their knowledge. It is hardly necessary for me to tell you that I could not approve such proceedings. When I join in an election it must be one partaking of the char-

acter of real, genuine democracy. It must be one of the people, conducted in an open and honorable manner, and in a spirit of patriotism. It is somewhat singular that all the leaders of this movement, which so signally failed, are strong pro-slavery men; and the belief is almost irresistible that they were actuated more by a desire to preserve the "peculiar institution," than a real, sincere wish to restore civil authority.

The importance of establishing a civil government among us, and restoring Louisiana again to her proper position in the Union, cannot be overrated. Such an event would not only remove from us many of the restrictions, burdens and inconveniences which now rest so heavily upon us, incident to the insurrection and the existence of martial law, and against which we hear so many complaints in the community; but it would also strengthen the Union cause elsewhere in our country, and have a salutary effect abroad. As soon as the Union lines are extended to embrace a few more parishes, which can be done at any time, we should reorganize our State Government, and place ourselves completely in line with the loyal States of the Union. There is no reason why we should not all unite in this great movement, and put an end to the stigma of disloyalty which still rests upon the fair fame of our noble State. The whole country looks to us for immediate action in this matter. The President feels a deep interest in it, and, with that tender regard for the rights of the people which distinguishes his administration, is anxious to give you the selection of your own civil officers. Indeed, even in December last, he told me that just as fast as we could name to him competent and loyal citizens of our own, he would fill the Federal offices of this State with them. He has already acted on this principle in the appointment of a Judge, District Attorney, Marshal, and other officers. Let us then, like good citizens, proud of our rights, come together in a spirit of harmony and patriotism, and place Louisiana where she belongs, and where she can be of service to the country.

But how are we to do this? Are we to resort to and continue to live under the present Constitution of Louisiana, or are we to call a Convention and make a new Constitution? Are we to recognize and protect the limited amount of slavery which still exists, or are we, by a new Constitution, to wipe slavery from our soil? These are important questions They are deserving of our most serious attention and study. Many of us are quite rash, and many very timid, in coming to a decision; many are of one opinion, many of another; many are governed by calm reason and justice, others by interest and prejudice. I make neither plan a condition of my Unionism. I recognize good and true Union men on both sides, and I do not think that the cause which we all have so much at heart will be at all advanced by encouraging the bandying of such epithets as "Abolitionists" and "Copperheads." But, as the time is fast arriving when every man must take sides on these questions, and as many of you have expressed a desire to have my views on them. I will briefly give them to you.

I think the easiest and most prudent and expeditious way of restoring this State to all her rights in the Union, and giving her a civil government, is to call a Convention and frame a new Constitution. But we are told by the mysterious gentlemen who meet in the Masonic Hall, that there is no authority vested with the power to call a Convention except the Legislature, and that the Constitution can only be changed in the manner pointed out by its own provisions. If this were true, we would have to wait a long time before we could obtain a new Constitution; for there is now scarcely a Legislature in existence, and even if there were, it is exceedingly doubtful whether it would be willing to call a Convention.

The [present Constitution itself was not framed and adopted in accordance with the directory provisions on that subject laid down in the former Constitution. But even the Legislature is not vested by the present Constitution with the power to call a Convention for such a purpose. Nor can the constitutional provisions which are relied on, prevent the people from exercising their sovereignty and power in calling a Convention, in their own name, instead of going through the machinery of a legislative body, whenever they choose to do so, especially in a time of war and treason on the part of their agents. No, the people of the State have a right to act thus, and if they wish again to enjoy peace, happiness and prosperity, the sooner they call this Convention and make a new Constitution, the better.

The present Constitution of the State is unjust to the city of New Orleans; discriminates unfairly between the slaveholder and the poor man, and is a barrier to the spirit of progress and humanity in our midst. It is, emphatically, the slaveholders' Constitution. The poor men of the State, recognizing it as the enactment of a majority, submit to it like good Democrats. But as the slaveholders themselves were the first to disregard and throw it aside, and to join in the rebellion, they cannot complain when we, who are in favor of the Union, are also desirous of setting it aside and making a new one to suit ourselves. Turn about is fair play.

I do not base my opposition to the present Constitution on its pro-slavery features exclusively. It has many other serious defects. I, and, I believe, every member of the bar in this city, object to the election of judges by the people. The respect and sanctity which should envelop the judicial robes forbid the ermine from mingling in the strifes of party contests. We want no judges on the bench elected by party spirit and carrying with them party prejudices. The appointment of judges by the Governor, and their confirmation by the Senate, will, of course, be somewhat influenced by party politics; but in such case the large number of litigants appearing before them will not be known as either friends or opponents of the judges, as they had no direct agency in their appointment, and can, therefore, reasonably expect impartial justice from the courts. From the experience we have had under an elective judiciary since the adoption of the present Constitution, I do not know of a single individual in this city, of any respectable standing, who is not in favor of a change in the mode of selecting our judiciary.

But the most serious objection to the present Constitution, and that which came near defeating it before the people in 1852, is that arising from the basis of representation which it prescribes. Article eighth commences thus: "Representation in the House of Representatives shall be equal and uniform, and shall be regulated and ascertained by the total population of each of the several parishes of the State." The iniquity of this provision can best be illustrated by supposing an example. Suppose the basis under this provision be fixed at one representative for every fifteen thousand inhabitants of all colors and conditions, and that the Parish of Jefferson has fifteen thousand inhabitants, all white and free, and the Parish of Assumption fifteen thousand inhabitants, of whom fourteen thousand nine hundred and eighty are slaves, and the other twenty are white men. Do you not see that in such a case the twenty white men in a slaveholding parish have the same vote and influence in the House as the fifteen thousand white persons in what might be termed the "freesoil" parish?

Is this fair and just to the small planters and farmers, the adventurous frontiersmen, the honest mechanics, hard labors, the enterprizing manufacturers and merchants and the

professional men of the States? Nō, certainly not. Why should a man, because he owns a plantation and slaves, have greater political rights than other men who have no such profitable investments? What gives such property a superiority over other property politically? When the Convention which framed the Constitution of 1845, had under consideration a similar proposition, Mr. Roselius, then a senatorial delegate from this parish, very properly s aid:

"So far from entertaining the idea of placing the basis according to population, gentlemen say that a par icular kind of property should be preferred. They say slaves should be represented, and are in favor of a mixed basis composed of population and exclusively of slave property. If slaves be adopted because they are property, they are the most unstable and least permanent kind of property. Why not adopt other property? Real property? Why confine it to the slaves?

Thus spoke the Nestor of the Louisiana bar in 1845; and thus he closed a speech of great eloquence and power:

"*Before this issue all party distinctions will cease.* Not a single vote in the city will be cast in favor of a Constitution which contains so infamous a proposition. The city will be united in its resistance, and will have the sympathies and voices of the country who are not insensible to the dictates of justice. The Constitution, with such a principle, will never be sanctioned—never! never! never! In common parlance, the delegation from the city will take the stump in opposition to its ratification, and will point out its gross and flagrant injustice. They will appeal from the decision of this Convention to the decision of the people."

Such arguments defeated the proposition for the time. In 1852, when the present Constitution was before the people for ratification or rejection, an esteemed friend of mine, who was the leader in the opposition, and through whose influence the Constitution came near being rejected, used this language:

"When, for instance, the basis of representation in this State has for forty years been the qualified electors, and can an attempt to deviate from this, as has been done in the new Constitution, upon which the people will soon be called to pronounce judgment, be regarded in any other light than a deliberate conspiracy to confer upon property rights, of which the people, it is hoped, will not permit themselves to be despoiled? Has anything ever been done heretofore, similar to the treason against the people contemplated in this new organic law? Have the people of any other State in the Union ever consented to a compromise of their dearest rights, or to a vile barter of them, at the bidding of a grasping oligarchy. Who ever heard of an American population retrograding in their republicanism; or of the people of any State in the South approving a Constitution intended to elevate the slave to the legislative importance of the white man?"

Again he said:

"The idea that the free white population of this State can be reconciled to any system by which political power is to be transferred from their hands to those of men owning large gangs of slaves, is equally preposterous and dangerous; and we earnestly entreat every one who is led away by this belief, to study the history of this country with more attention before the fatal step is justified by him.

"It is all very well to say that unless this slave basis of representation be adopted, New Orleans will be still further restricted in her representation. This may gull some people, but those who rely on it as a successful cover to the political degradation of the people of Louisiana, sure to follow the adoption of the new Constitution, miserably deceive themselves. The people are not fools, whatever office-hunting or money-corporation demagogues may think or say in regard to them."

Thus wrote the powerful pen of Dr. Hugh Kennedy, in the *True Delta* of August 13th, 1852. These quotations from the productions of two of our most talented and influential citizens, explain themselves and have a deep significance at this time, considering the opinions now entertained by those gentlemen. The same reasoning applies to the representation

in the State Senate, which is not only based on the total population, but which limits New Orleans to a certain fixed number of Senators no matter what may be her population.

We have thus seen that the present Constitution is more calculated to protect and benefit the slaveholder than the other classes of our population. This is also the case with the laws of the State enacted by Legislatures elected on such a basis. Instead of developing the mechanical and manufacturing capacities and resources of the State—instead of paying some attention to the poorer and industrious classes of our citizens—instead of giving Louisiana a name for enterprise, arts and sciences, our Legislatures have confined themselves almost exclusively to legislating for the protection of the interests of slavery. Much has been said by the admirers of slavery—those who pretend to believe it a "divine institution;" about the spirit of humanity and Christianity of our laws. I must confess I have not been able to find much of this spirit. I certainly do not see it in the statutes preventing masters from liberating their slaves; providing for the mode of trial and punishment of slaves; making it criminal to teach slaves to read and write; and allowing slave families to be broken up, and the parents and children, husbands and wives, to be separated forever in this world. If the interests of slaveholders are sacrificed in this way, it is their own fault. Let us get over the difficulty as soon as possible, by emancipating the few slaves still in our State, and apply ourselves to the duty of devising some new plan for the prosecution of the agricultural interests.

Some slaveholders erroneously imagine that when the laborers on the plantations cease to be slaves the planters will be ruined, and no reasoning can convince them to the contrary. Let us go into figures for a moment, and see if they are correct. A good field hand was worth in times of peace about fifteen hundred dollars. A fair interest on this sum in most of the Southern States was 10 per cent. per annum, making one hundred and fifty dollars, so that it may be said the planter pays, or deprives himself of, one hundred and fifty dollars a year for the services of his slave. He also runs the risk of the sickness or death of the slave, and escape from his involuntary servitude. When there is no slavery, and by adopting the "compensated labor system," the planter can hire a negro for ten dollars a month, making one hundred and twenty dollars a year, and run none of the risks of the slave-owner, and receive a more willing and cheerful, and, therefore, more advantageous labor. Many other facts might be mentioned to show the advantage to the intelligent planter of the free labor system.

But many will say, "the negro when freed will not work." I humbly differ with them in this regard. Stringent and effective vagrant laws can be passed by the Legislature, which will secure their labor to the State, if they do not work otherwise. Some people say, "the negro, if free, will leave the plantation at the very time his services are most needed, when the cane is to be cut and ground, or when the cotton is to be picked." This can also be provided against. The contracts for hire can be so made as to allow the planter to retain in his hands several months' wages until the grinding or picking season is over, and in case the laborer should violate his contract a forfeiture of wages would be the consequence. Thus it will be seen the planter would not suffer the least by the change. And if all this will not work well, then let the negroes be sent to colonies abroad, where they will cease to trouble us; and let the plantations be divided into small farms and cultivated by white labor. The cry that white labor cannot be profitably employed in this latitude could easily be shown to be erroneous, did my time permit me to enter on that field.

Many, and especially blacks, will object to any proposition to colonize the colored people. The suggestion of colonization comes from no ill-will towards the negro. Colonization has been advocated by some of the leading minds and philanthropists of our country. It is pretty well ascertained, I think, that Mr. Lincoln favors it, and that the Postmaster General has advocated it. John McDonogh, whom you all remember as the philanthropic millionaire and the friend of the negro, gives expression, quaintly, to this impressive language in his instructions to his executors :

"Having been the friend of the black and colored man through the whole period of my long life, I will now (when near its close) give to them, (the free black and colored man, wherever he may be, through out our widely extended country,) a parting counsel and advice, in the interest of themselves and their posterity. The counsel I offer them, in all the sincerity of my soul, is that they separate themselves from the white man. That they take their wives, their children, and their substance, and depart to the land of their fathers; that great and ancient land, where they and their posterity, through all their generations, may be safe, may be happy, living under their own fig tree and vine, having none to make them afraid."

While I favor the emancipation of the slaves, and consider myself a friend of the colored people, I cannot but regret and condemn the course which some of them are now pursuing in this city. At a meeting lately held by them, the proceedings of which were reported in one of our newspapers, resolutions were passed demanding the right to vote with white men, and a petition was drawn up to be handed to the Military Governor asking such right. These persons do not style themselves colored people in their resolutions and petition ; they think the words "natives of Louisiana" more significant and high-sounding, and appear to forget that the general term "natives," includes white persons as well as colored. The spirit of Know-Nothingism which pervades their document is more evident and more boldly expressed in the speeches of their orators. One of their oracles was not satisfied with giving us his legal opinion that "Louisiana is a Territory, not a State"—for which opinion he had distinguished authority, as we have already seen—but thought proper to make an attack on our naturalized citizens, especially those from Ireland and Germany, which was as unnecessary and impertinent as it was unjust. "Go to the Registration office," said this colored Know-Nothing, and see the crosses there of Irishmen and Germans who cannot write their names." This fling at the intelligent, honest and Union-loving citizens of German origin is as ill-timed and ungracious as it is untrue. The Germans as a general thing do not make their crosses, but sign their names, and in beautiful penmanship at that. They have excellent schools in abundance in the country of their birth. As to the Irish, the oppression of the British Government deprives many of them of a book-education ; but their general vivacity, activity, wit and intelligence, is proverbial. No battle has yet been fought in the cause of the Union, in which Irish and German blood has not been freely and nobly shed for the good of the whole country. The deeds of those who went to battle and imperiled their lives in our country's cause, under the skillful Sigel and the dashing Meagher, will be imperishable in history. The rash and imprudent statements of such speakers will do more damage than good to the cause of their race. The Union men of this State have a pretty heavy task before them already ; they are sacrificing their dearest friendships in order to assist in saving the Union and giving freedom to the colored race. If the colored men are not satisfied with the efforts we are making towards general emancipation, but insist upon thrusting other issues and obstacles in our path, they may find all our efforts in vain. But let us see what principles they adopt where they have the power. On the 26th day of July, 1847, the people of the

Republic of Liberia adopted a Constitution, of which the 13th section of Article II reads thus :

"The great object of forming these colonies being to provide a home for the dispersed and oppressed children of Africa, and to regenerate and enlighten this benighted continent, *none but persons of color shall be admitted to citizenship in this Republic.*"

But, ladies and gentlemen, I feel that I have trespassed too much upon your patience. I think I have adhered to my promise made at the commencement of my remarks ; I have studiously avoided any attempts at eloquence, and I have given you my views in an honest, plain and practical manner. I would have been glad to have touched on other questions of importance, but it is time that I should close. In conclusion, let me appeal to you, as lovers of your country, to discard all personal controversies and irritating discussions calculated to divide Union men, and to sink all minor questions into the great one of unconditional loyalty to the Union. Let us imitate the noble example of our brethren in the great States of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York, whose unconditional devotion to the Union has crushed out all other questions ; and who, in their love of country, have cast aside all former party differences, have ceased for a time to be Republicans or Democrats, have divided on no minor issues, but have, in their recent elections, nominated Union men, and have worthily achieved a most glorious Union victory.

The speaker was frequently interrupted by loud and enthusiastic demonstrations of applause, and when he retired the people seemed to regret that he did not continue to talk on, for he could have held them listening all the night long.

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